

# EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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## REMARKS BY U.S. AMBASSADOR MARCIA BERNICAT AT COOPERATION AFLOAT READINESS AND TRAINING (CARAT) 2015 CLOSING CEREMONY

October 4, 2015,  
Bangladesh Navy Base Issa Khan  
School of Maritime Warfare and Tactics (SMWT), Chittagong

- Rear Admiral HABIB (*Commander Chittagong Naval Area*),
- Commodore KHALED (*Commodore, Commanding Bangladesh Naval Flotilla*)
- All CARAT participants in attendance here today,  
Assalam al alikum, **SHUBHO OPORANNO**, and good afternoon.

It is an honor to be here today at Issa Khan and to see our strong bilateral relationship at work between the Bangladesh Navy and the United States Navy. I recently participated in the fourth annual U.S.-Bangladesh Bilateral Security Dialogue, where our governments reviewed the successes of our security cooperation and discussed ways in which we can continue to build on those successes in the challenging future ahead of us. Maritime Security is a cornerstone of our security relationship and will certainly be so for many years to come.

For nearly 70 years, the United States, along with our allies and partners, have maintained freedom of navigation and security in Asia, based on the international law that underpins the region's remarkable economic growth and stability. To do this, the United States implements a "whole of government" strategy. We employ diplomacy, engage multilateral institutions, support international laws and standards, and build maritime capacity. Maritime Domain Awareness and Maritime Security are important components of our broader commitment to maintaining peace and stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

Freedom of the seas means more than the freedom of commercial vessels to transit through international waterways. Freedom of the seas includes all of the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea and airspace under international law, including for military ships and aircraft.

We value the steps Bangladesh has taken to counter the illicit trafficking of persons and drugs, as well as Bangladesh's other anti-piracy actions taken on the high seas. This, in turn, helps fight other forms of transnational crime, including terrorism. The United States welcomes additional opportunities to collaborate with Bangladesh to deter smuggling and trafficking in the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh's EEZ, and throughout the Indo-Asia Pacific.

CARAT Bangladesh 2015 exemplifies our commitment to maritime capacity building. Both of our countries' mutual interest in protecting freedom of the seas is what brings our navies together in CARAT. Your professionalism and dedication to excellence makes this partnership successful. Both of our navies are better prepared to respond to a number of emergency situations thanks to CARAT.

Our navies need to respond to a wide range of challenges. Piracy and smuggling will continue to be a matter of concern. It is essential that when commercial or private ships and planes experience distress, they can rely on the Bangladesh Navy's critical search and rescue capabilities.

Regional and international partners will continue to face natural disasters and require the rapid delivery of humanitarian assistance that navies like ours can provide. Bangladesh is looked to as a leader in providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to its neighbors and partners in times of need, and the U.S. Navy has been supportive in this regard. CARAT builds our individual capabilities to conduct operations like these. It also allows for us to act jointly, better understand each other, and appreciate the enduring resolve we both bring to peace and prosperity in South Asia. The joint exercises of CARAT build interoperability that multiplies the capabilities of our navies and gives us the wherewithall to overcome any challenge.

Thinking about interoperability and drawing on one of the topics discussed during the Security Dialog, let me leave you with a challenge: Imagine how a mutual Logistics Security Agreement could positively benefit our navies in conducting bilateral re-fueling and re-supply operations anywhere on the seas, should a disaster strike, a threat emerge, or a training opportunity arise. A Logistics Security Agreement would make both of our navies faster and more responsive to people in need and in providing security in the Bay of Bengal. Such an agreement would also provide opportunities to further build upon our successful bilateral cooperation anywhere, anytime.

I hope that we can continue to discuss this idea and the many benefits such an agreement can provide.

In closing, thank you for your participation in CARAT Bangladesh 2015 – the fifth example of our growing relationship. Thank you for your commitment to the continued freedom of the seas, and in the Bay of Bengal in particular.

We should also acknowledge the upcoming arrival of the *Somudra Avijan*, which will set sail from California to come to her new home here in Chittagong. We wish the crew of the *Somudra Avijan* fair seas and that the Almighty provides them safe passage back to their families. I look forward to seeing the *Somudra Joy* and *Somudra Avijan* participate in future CARAT exercises, and to the enduring and growing navy-to-navy relationship between our two nations.

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*\*As prepared for delivery*